

Comments to Dan Ellsberg on Manuscripts

Reading these as an editor might, I think that with some cutting, and the ~~omission~~ of one manuscript, they are ready for publication with very little work of writing introductions to give settings. They indicate the development of your thinking in a very interesting way. The cutting would eliminate recommendations that have mainly a specific or tactical importance and less enduring interest ^{than others,} and would leave the evaluations of the situations as you saw them. The one piece I would eliminate is a retrospective analysis on Infeasible Goals and Violent Stalemate. It differs in key from the contemporary pieces, and to my mind interrupts the vivid flow of these pieces. It is therefore paler than the others, and belongs in a different place. But whether or not you or others agree with these specific suggestions, my major judgment is that the manuscripts should be published, with only a very small amount of introductory or transitional inserts.

Visit to An Insecure Province, Oct. 1965. Use parts I and II, ~~evaluative~~ descriptive and evaluative. Omit part III, Vann Theses, except for the last three paragraphs of para. 9, and para. 10.

Pentagon Papers Documents. Dispensable, but use if preferred, with a brief introduction (5 or 10 lines) noting that the attitudes or reactions of the Vietnamese do not figure in the evaluations.

Revolutionary Development. Use. Little would be lost, and a quickened pace gained, if pp. 1-11 were cut and replaced by an introduction of a page or less.

Occupation ~~of~~^V Oilspot. This duplicates the theme found in other pieces, and this short piece too could be eliminated.

Memo of 4 May 1967 re Ky's candidacy. I would use pp. 1-12 as

edited, and let an editor cut the rest drastically, say by 80 percent--
or eliminate. The remaining sections seem to me to be ^{or} ~~of~~ more limited
interest than the first dozen pages, ~~xxx~~ to deal with immediate tactics
rather than principles.

The Day Loc Tien Was Pacified. Responsibility of Officials.
Testimony. Quagmire. Use as edited.

For all the pieces that I think should be used with virtually
no further work by you ~~except~~ to review a finished product, ~~Ixxxx~~
by "Use" I mean use as already edited. I believe that a skillful editor
who has become informed concerning the materials could prepare them,
including introductory notes to be written with your voice, with only
general instructions such as those above. The pieces with cuts such
as I have indicated seem to me to show development of your perceptions,
and to be intelligible and fascinating without further elaboration,
embellishment, or explanatory frames.

E.E.H.
5 Nov. 1971